

Hungerford take lead

By **STUART EARP** Hungerford 1, Wycombe W 0

HELLENIC Leaguers Hungerford took a deserved first leg lead on Wednesday night in the 'Cyprus Cup' — a trophy put up for competition by Wycombe Wanderers. The second leg is tonight (Friday) at Loakes Park.

Wycombe and Hungerford arranged this two-leg competition to give the Blues practice before next Wednesday's Anglo-Italian match against Teramo. And I'm afraid that's all it turned out to be — practice. The hardy band of supporters who made the long trip to Hungerford must have been disappointed with a game that provided precious few thrills.

Hungerford's hard work and endeavour justly gained them this victory while in comparison one or two members of the Wycombe side were playing at half-pace. Still, this was a friendly after all and no-one really expected the standard of football to be anywhere near that of Wanderers' last few performances.

By packing their defence, Hungerford made life extremely difficult for Wanderers to break through and clear chances were few and far between. Best first half chance fell to Mick Holifield, who saw goalkeeper Charlie Palmer push his well struck shot against a post after 20 minutes. The rest of the half was littered with mistakes as the players struggled to get to grips with a wet surface, although the pitch itself was in excellent condition.

The second half had a good deal more to offer but Wanderers were badly let down by their finishing which robbed them of two or three goals. Dylan Evans was foiled by Palmer after a neat build-up soon after the interval but with

52 minutes gone, Hungerford took the lead.

Paul Birdseye's poor back pass went for a corner and Sid Webb's flag kick curled into the box. No-one headed clear and in the scramble, Norman Matthews sent in a shot. This was blocked but Matthews made the most of a second chance to prod the ball past John Maskell.

John Delaney cleverly beat Town's off-side trap after 63 minutes by dribbling through the back four but Palmer saved the shot well. Maskell pulled off an even better save 10 minutes later when Danny Robertson powered in a drive from 18 yards. Maskell parried the ball at full length but was beaten by Webb to the loose ball. Webb bent a shot towards the net but Keith Mead was on the line to head clear.

Holifield twice went close at the other end while Birdseye's inventive running promised much for the Blues but they seldom troubled Palmer, who had only one serious save to make in the closing stages. Howard Kennedy tried his luck with a 30 yard volley which the goalkeeper saved at the second attempt.

HUNGERFORD: C. Palmer; B. Faulkes, N. Matthews, C. Penny, G. Brown; J. Wyatt, D. Robertson, A. Matthews; S. Foster, M. Stratford, S. Webb. Sub. B. Marchant (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, D. Bullock (sub K. Mead 45 mins), J. Delaney, R. Eaton; D. Alexander, (sub B. Macrae 64 mins), T. Reardon, H. Kennedy, G. Anthony, D. Evans, M. Holifield.

SIX GUESTS FOR TOUR

WYCOMBE Wanderers are taking six guest players on their tour to Italy next month which incorporates the Anglo-Italian Inter-League Tournament matches against Pistoiese and Teramo.

The guests include Ilford striker John Butterfield, an experienced England amateur international and another forward, Peter Watson. Centre forward Watson made a big impression against Wycombe when they met his club Bishop's Stortford this season. Midfield player, Martin Gilligan, who played for Oxford City last term, is also included along with two Carnegie College students, Bobby Davis and John Priestley. A sixth guest has yet to be announced.

The 16 players are: J. Maskell, P. Spittle, P. Birdseye, R. Eaton, K. Mead, J. Delaney, T. Reardon, H. Kennedy, D. Alexander, D. Evans, P. Watson, J. Butterfield, R. Davis, J. Priestley, M. Gilligan, A. N. Other.

Regulars this season Tony Horseman, Geoff Anthony and Mick Holifield were all unable to make the trip, as was next season's new manager Ted Powell. Wanderers leave on Friday, June 11 and return on Monday, June 21.

On Wednesday, Wycombe meet Teramo in their second Anglo-Italian match of the tournament. A fortnight ago they trounced Pistoiese 4-0 at Loakes Park and the Blues will be hoping for a similar result.